

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

CINCUSNAVEUR

EUCOM

CINCUSAFE

CINCUSAREUR

USDOCOSOUTH

USINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

USNMR SHAPE

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EUCOM FOR POLAD AND J-2

BEIRUT FOR VOA ROBERTS

EO 11652 N/A

TAGS: PBOR, LOS, ENGR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: TPAO PLANS FOR OIL EXPLORATION IN THE AEGEAN

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REF: ANKARA 2482 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO U.S. PETROLEUM ENGINEERING CONSULTANT HERE, TPAO LACKS TECHNICAL CAPABILITY TO CONDUCT OIL EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES IN THE AEGEAN AND IS THEREFORE ACTIVELY SEEKING PARTNERSHIP WITH A FOREIGN FIRM.
END SUMMARY

1. IN THE VIEW OF U.S. CITIZEN JACK PERRITT OF THE HALLIBURTON COMPANY (WHOSE INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS INCLUDE SERVICING AND ENGINEERING CONSULTATIONS FOR MAJOR OIL COMPANIES) THE TURKISH PETROLEUM CORPORATION (TPAO) WILL BE UNABLE TO BEGIN SEARCHING FOR OIL IN THE AEGEAN (REFTEL) WITHOUT FIRST REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH A PRIVATE CONTRACTOR OR A MAJOR OIL COMPANY TO SUPPLY THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT.

2. TPAO DOES NOT HAVE THE EQUIPMENT TO CARRY OUT EVEN THE FIRST STAGE OF OFF-SHORE EXPLORATION (I.E., SEISMIC AND GEOLOGICAL STUDIES), NOT TO MENTION THEIR LACK OF CAPABILITY TO SET UP A RIG, SINK PROBES, AND DO THE ACTUAL DRILLING. WORLD-WIDE, 90 PERCENT OF SUCH ACTIVITIES, PERRITT OBSERVED, ARE CARRIED OUT BY AMERICAN OR GERMAN FIRMS. HE DID NOT THINK A MAJOR OIL COMPANY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN EXPLORATIONS IN THE AEGEAN AT A TIME WHEN ALL AVAILABLE OFF-SHORE RIGS (AND THOSE ON ORDER FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS) ARE INVOLVED IN THE NORTH SEA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA. PERRITT SAID AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR (E.G., WESTERN GEOPHYSICAL COMPANY, WHICH HAS DONE PREVIOUS WORK IN THE BLACK SEA) MIGHT HAVE THE EQUIPMENT TO CONDUCT THE PRELIMINARY GEOLOGICAL STUDIES IN THE AEGEAN, BUT ONLY A MAJOR COMPANY COULD PROVIDE AN OFF-SHORE DRILLING RIG. PERRITT SAID HE KNEW TPAO WAS ACTIVELY SEEKING A PARTNER, BUT DID NOT KNOW WHICH COMPANIES HAVE BEEN APPROACHED. HE SPECULATED THAT THE AEGEAN FIND MIGHT NOT BE PROMISING ENOUGH TO ENABLE TPAO TO COMPETE FOR SCARCE RIGS. (PERRITT BELIEVES THE MOST PROMISING AREA FOR EXPLORATION IS NOT THE ZONE OF DISPUTE BUT WHERE THE GREEKS HAVE FOUND OIL OFF THASOS ISLAND. IN HIS OPINION, HOWEVER, THE PRODUCTION OF THE THASOS SITE, REPORTEDLY 100,000 BARRELS PER DAY, HAD BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED AND WAS CLOSER TO 20,000 BARRELS PER DAY.)

3. A REPRESENTATIVE OF ATLANTIC-RICHFIELD, WITH ASSISTANCE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMBASSY COMMERCIAL ATTACHE, RECENTLY MET WITH TPAO DIRECTOR GENERAL AND GOT PETROLEUM OFFICIALS REGARDING OFF-SHORE EXPLORATIONS IN THE BLACK SEA AND ELSEWHERE. (ATLANTIC-RICHFIELD ALREADY HOLDS A CONTRACT FROM THE GOT FOR EXPLORATION NEAR SAROS HARBOR IN THRACE AND IN OTHER AREAS, ALL OUTSIDE THE DISPUTED AREA IN THE AEGEAN.) WE HAVE NOT HEARD WHETHER AEGEAN OPERATIONS WERE DISCUSSED.

4. COMMENT: FROM HALLIBURTON REPRESENTATIVE'S REMARKS,
IT APPEARS THAT A U.S. COMPANY MIGHT WELL BE OFFERED A
CONTRACT TO DO OFF-SHORE PROSPECTING FOR TPAO IN THE DISPUTED
AEGEAN ZONE. IN CASE SOME SUCH COMPANY ASKS OUR ADVICE,
WE WILL PROVIDE DETAILS ON THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY.
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